

Revisiting Educational Policies of Pakistan: A Personal Perspective.

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Introduction:

Life is the only dynamic force in the probabilities of the dark universe, and knowledge & education is the only dynamic force bestowing the dynamics of living with a momentum in the natural direction- the right direction and the virtuous orientation. This is the “only source & force” for acquiring betterment, progress, welfare, dignity, glamour, prosperity, legitimacy and perpetual peace on the planet.

We see an innumerable numbers of individuals and cents of states and nations on the globe, but what distinguishes them on the holistic views of the globe are their codes of conduct, use of natural and human resources in the right direction, output production, proper planning, prudence and far & fore-sightedness, which ultimately results in their present distinguishing status achieved by their tireless “struggle for the collective progress”.

This “collective progress” is unachievable until individual progress is made, and “individual progress” is unachievable until the knowledge is attained. So for progress at any level, it is just that education should be deemed and provided to the masses, justly, as a basic right.

That’s why we can state certainly after all the above analysis, that the education is the only road to the progress of nations and welfare of people.

Education in Pakistan:

The **18th amendment** (8th April 2010) provides the recognition of the children's right to education and insertion of **a new section under Article 25A** to provide a constitutional guarantee that state will provide free and compulsory education to all girls and boys up to age 16.

Even before the 18th amendment, the basic Right To Education (RTE) was recognized undoubtedly by the founders of Pakistan, right after its creation, as we see that the first national education conference was held at Karachi from November 27th to December 1st (1947) and Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah- the founder of Pakistan- was himself its convener.

But still the providence of proper, qualitative and quantitative free education has always remained a problem. This persisting problem and failure of every government were not due to the lack of policy-maker professionals and experts, or due to a lack of methods, foreign help, guidance or aid, but due to ever persisting lack of a strong political and social will of the implementation of fairly carved policies.

Following is a list of the Educational policies of Pakistan since 1947:

1. National Education Policy (1947)
2. National Education Policy (1959)
3. National Education Policy (1970)
4. National Education Policy (1972)
5. National Education Policy (1979)
6. National Education Policy (1992)
7. National Education Policy (1998-2010)
8. National Education Policy (2009-2015)
9. National Education Policy (2017-2025)

This long list must not delude anyone, and no Pakistani should boast over these endeavours, because these policies were the landmarks and endeavours only in black and white (on paper), and none was implemented in the history of Pakistan on the practical grounds.

I am able to state the failure of these policies because I have read the recent National Educational Policy (2017), in which it is stated in its foreword, by the Secretary of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training- Haseeb Athar that :

”the current literacy rate of Pakistan is 60 pc (for 10 years and above)¹”.

This statement clearly projects and loudly mourns over the lack of implementations of all the previous 8 educational policies of Pakistan, apart from the present one which is going to unveil its own significance or wastefulness either through the actions of implementation or laziness in the near future.

- **Is National Education Policy [(NEP) 2017-2025] a hope anymore for the future National Educational Progress?**

What an irony of fate that in 2017, a federal committee, comprising of 13 sub-committees-each headed by a convener, and each in a quest for the research and formulation in a “specific dimension” sit for the policy formulation, and in its chapter for Finance, recommends a 4pc of GDP to be invested in Education in the immediate next year of 2018, but we see that only a small amount- PKR 46.7b out of total budget of PKR 5.246t -around 2pc of total budget- was allocated to education sector in the fiscal year 2018-19, not very much different of the previous year’s 35.7 b pc of allocation to the education sector.

So a policy which is not very even a little different and effective “in implementation” from the previous ones, and has failed in complying to the financing role the very next year (in budget 2k18), so on what basis and how can we assume, suppose or hope that the further extraordinarily noble, fairly and calculatedly placed optimistic policy recommendations, like:-

Commitments to raise literacy rate to 90 percent by 2025, the extraordinarily large targets (in view of the present situation and lack of past implementations), of 2025 Vision 2025, the propagation of ideology of Islam; teaching of Quran

¹Foreword of National Educational Policy(2017-2025), Ministry of Education

with translation; teaching of AHADIS² and SIRAT-ATAYYABA³; character building (TARBIYYA⁴) and purification of soul (TAZKIYYA-ANNAFS⁵), Allocation of 45-50% of education budget for promotion of primary education as a whole and 30% of primary education budget, increasing access to the Higher Education of adults from the current 8% to 15% of the 17-23 age group, establishing 15 new public science and technology universities, setting the targets for 50% pass-outs of Technical and Vocational education, allocation of 5% of education budget for Special Education, facilitating the establishment of 50 new private sector universities, setting up of 70 smart sub-campuses and the initiatives for the preparation of 10,000 PhDs in future- are going to be fulfilled by the government in future, when it has stumbled at its very first step and initiative of budgeting the education fairly for 2018-19- to 4%- according to NEP 2017 .

Pakistan- along with the lack of implementation of these policies- has also been a consistent and irresponsible debtor to the fulfilment of International commitments (ending in 2015) like the participation goals, committed previously, for the programs of achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Education For All (EFA) statuses.⁶

• **Reforms In Educational policies:**

After passing through a history of turmoil, national, social, religious, educational and leadership crisis, if we- as a nation- really sense to transform our rusted irons kept in moist air, to shining golds having their glamour, if we want to sail proudly our drowning, and almost sunken ships to the coasts of a bright national future of grace and glory, we have to take some drastic steps both for the devisal of needed and effective policies, and then their straight-forward implementations in the immediate interests of the nation and homeland. Some prescribed measures are as follows:

² احادیث

³ سیرت انبیا کرام

⁴ تربیہ

⁵ تزکیہ النفس

⁶ Report of Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) by Aftab Hussain on March 02, 2015.

**PRESCRIBED MEASURES FOR THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL
PROGRESS, REAL REFORMS AND IMPROVEMENTS:**

Part One.

Note: *These points, which are recommended individually- through the personal insight of the researcher (Muhammad Usman) were also found to be somehow, and in some manner, included in the previous education national policies and also in the presently ongoing NEP(2017):*

- 1) The proper and effective teaching of Islamic Faraz Uloom⁷, complete Tarjuma- e -Qur'an till Matric class, and revision of Tarjuma -e -Quran⁸ in professional and degree awarding universities, in the manner, deemed suitable, should be done for the moral, spiritual and ethical grooming and character building of the national assets.
- 2) One National curriculum, one national board & one national examination system should be introduced i.e. all educational boards, all public and private educational institutions, in all provinces, should have the same curriculum, standards, policies and examination and result producing an equivalent system of criteria.
- 3) Better teacher hiring standards for both public and private sectors should be maintained, and a control over private school/college teachers' hiring standards should also be maintained. The teaching faculty must be regularized and should have a strong check and balance system upon them.

⁷ فرض علوم.

⁸ ترجمہ قرآن.

Part Two.

Note: Following points were included in the NEP 2017-25, but they need to be more emphatic and effective, most probably after a proper, and conscientious review of those policies suggested before:

- 4) Abolition of provincial differences, quota system and promotion of a “National merit-based admission system for Higher and Professional/Degree program Education”.
- 5) Additional proper role of teachers in non-formal societal education for preaching the societies/localities, by the local teachers, on daily/weekly basis should be maintained, to enhance the process of civilization, societal growth and regulation, promotion of reverence and respect for law and order, and for a change in the national behaviour and for collective progress.
- 6) Teachers for societal awareness should be constituted a separate mandatory entity, for/by every department of state, to enhance the knowledge for the works of that respective departments and to facilitate their cooperation with the people by spreading awareness. Although it is somewhere a scattered and decentralized idea, and also resembles in function with the 5th point, but still can be addressed as a separate initiative further on.
- 7) Provision of totally free and standard education in all institutions (both public and private) for all classes- till Matric. (In the Private institutions in a sense that by gracefully raising the standards of the Public sector, so as to help massive shifts of students to the free totally free of cost Public sector education).

Part Three.

Note: *The following points were found to be missed fatally in the NEP 2017:*

- 8) State-censured and royally biased history should be banned/controlled/restricted/abandoned, and true, just & accurate knowledge, in all the spheres of education, should be imparted to the students (like America as an example), as a step towards Universal justice in true and just education impartment, thus, aiming true human progress.
- 9) Improvement of govt. schools' standards and automatic admissions of children upon/after birth through local government system's help and assistance.
- 10) Co-education policy implications should be revised, reformed, restructured, reshaped and then reimplemented after reforms to confirm educational conducts as per the religious and cultural rules, norms, precautions and standards as it is observed to be producing contrary results to the different nurturing spiritual, educational, Tarbiyya, Tazkiya and character building aspects as defined in the NEP (2017)⁹. The co-education policy must be reformed at least, keeping in view its present deluding and destructive outcomes in the educational spheres and institutions.
- 11) Being equally normal human beings, as we know and believe ourselves not to be less than any other nation (specifically U.K/West) in intelligence and intellectual standards, so an increment of passing marks to 65 pc (equal to that of the Britain/ West)¹⁰ & increment of learning techniques and standards according to the needs and approaches of modern era, through the increment of the frequency of the checking, moderation and advancement of the curriculums should be done, rather than that frequency of curricular up gradation mentioned in the NEP(2017)- as 5 and 10 years- for different respective cases.¹¹

⁹ Chapter 3 of Islamic Education, NEP 2017, emphasizing upon *the propagation of ideology of Islam; teaching of Quran with translation; teaching of AHADIS and SIRAT-ATAYYABA; character building (TARBIYYA) and purification of soul (TAZKIYYA-ANNAFAS)*.

¹⁰ Outlook Pakistan.com internet article of 7th June 2017, by ZohaibZahid.

¹¹ Curricular portion of NEP 2017.

- 12) Conduction of fair examinations across the state and especially in the less developed rural areas of Sindh and Balochistan, as we see on the eves of almost every annual examination, that the T.V news headlines are flooded with continuous reports of open, courageous and shameless crimes of conducting cheating acts during the Board's examinations.
- 13) Assessment transparency efforts and ensuring the competency and legitimacy of the so-called paper checkers should be maintained, which situations, corrupt arrangements and such incompetent personnel provided with such an authority result otherwise, into pitiful and unreliable, unexpectedly good or bad results, due to improper checking customs and practices.
- 14) Strong check maintenance over student school continuation through the introduction and implementation and usage of award and reward methods, and somewhere, through minor civil punishment measures (in the form of fines, jails, and/or certain privileges uplifting)over parents/ students in case of child school abandonment or parental non-cooperation.
- 15) And the most important- the last but not the least recommendation, which was "totally missed" in 2017 and early 8 NEPs in the history,&whose carrying out drastically is the foremost need of the time is:

What should be Our slogan and Demand? :

**“ IMPLEMENTATION, IMPLEMENTATION, IMPLEMENTATION
AND ONLY A RUTHLESS POLICY: IMPLEMENTATION! ”**

Conclusion:

Every country, group, nation and state have at least some individuals, that by **acting upon** whose **guidance and suggestions**, that particular country, group, nation and state can proceed and succeed ultimately at every now and then.

Certainly, neither our country is a state of fanatics and wanderers, nor every one of us is illiterate and totally ignorant (so that we may lack guides and guidance). The point around which I am trying to make us all circum-

navigate is that: we do have those learned people, who are known as scholars, teachers, educationists, prudent stake-holders, committed workers (having suggestions and experiences of working on the ground), and guides in their respective fields.

It is also a known fact, that these outstanding people have suggested us with a lot of outstanding policies, as can be seen, and observed in all the NEPs, and their working agendas and paradigms. Then what were those elements and constraints which kept us to 60% of overall literacy rate even today i.e. after 71 years of our independence in 2018?

The answer lies in admitting the fact that anything which was and is (in the case of budget 2k18 for example) being missed is the policy implementations, keeping to commitments made, and their implications on the ground and in reality.

If we all, through a campaign, and through a collective movement, fasten and tighten our belts steadfast, to work enthusiastically for the loopholes in the implementations of the policies and commitments made, then certainly, we can get out of the present catastrophic conditions which we are facing now.

And this is a fact and another irony, that the National Education Policy (2017-25) after constructing all the Pisas in its sketching of policy in the 1st chapter, end into the dooming reality from the dark windows of the past, by admitting and fearing that this policy may also not end into nothing in 2025, due to a lack of implementations at centre and peripheries and at every nook and corner of the state. So in a sense, like me as a younger one and those policy-makers as older ones have ended in the same conclusions, I can certainly say, that “every old and young one of our nation clearly knows that where we all lack and where we fail in- keeping the promises made”.

In the words of NEP (2017-25):

Pakistan has a history of developing detailed and well- designed education policies since 1947 but has fallen short of implementing them. We have repeatedly set goals of free, universal basic education, quality higher education to produce innovative knowledge, skills and competencies and scholars committed to doing that in an ethical manner. We are at a point where good plans have to be implemented through a well- defined

monitoring and evaluation system of accountability, both at the provincial and federal levels. Without such a system we will continue to postpone rather than achieve our goals to another day and another education policy. It is urgent to break the layers of inertia if we want to successfully compete in the comity of nations and create a place of honour for our nation.

Bibliography:

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